

FIFTY YEARS AGO IN WORLD WAR II
January-February 1945

In the opening months of 1945, the jaws of yet another Russian winter had closed upon the armies of Germany and her allies. From the Baltic to the Adriatic, Soviet offensives were under way, inflicting irreplaceable losses in men and materiel. Allied gains in France threatened the borders of Germany herself, and the Italian peninsula was being painstakingly liberated in spite of determined resistance. The Japanese had even less cause for optimism in the Pacific; in the Philippines, assault convoys were massing in Leyte Gulf for the invasion of Luzon, while U.S. bombers and naval vessels hammered Japanese land, sea, and air forces. In spite of the fatigue of several years of combat, U.S. soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen demonstrated that they were still ready to press the fight until the job was done, and the extraordinary number of servicemen who earned the Medal of Honor in the last year of the war attests to their sacrifice.

*These and other highlights of World War II are excerpted from Bud Hannings' **A Portrait of the Stars and Stripes**, Volume II, available for \$50.00 from Seniram Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 432, Glenside, PA 19038.*

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 January | <i>Japanese aircraft, including Kamikazes, are hurled against assault convoys assembling in Leyte Gulf for the attack on Luzon.</i> |
| 7 January | <i>When enemy machinegun fire jeopardizes his unit, Staff Sergeant Curtis F. Shoup, Company I, 46th Infantry, assaults the position with his automatic rifle. Although gravely wounded, he presses the attack and destroys the machinegun with a grenade. He is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.</i> |
| 21 January | <i>The Second White Russian Front seizes Tannenberg, in East Prussia, as the First White Russian Front and the First Ukrainian Front move into Silesia, near Germany's border with Poland.</i> |
| 23 January | <i>The U.S. 7th Armored Division punches through stubborn German resistance, clearing a corridor into St. Vith.</i> |
| 3 February | <i>The 1st Battalion, 311th Infantry Regiment, crosses the Roer River by swimming and captures Dedenborn, while the 60th Infantry Regiment captures Dreiborn and Herhahn.</i> |
| 10 February | <i>The 82d Airborne Division overcomes bitter resistance to seize high ground overlooking the Roer River east of Bergstein.</i> |
| 13 February | <i>After a siege lasting a month and a half Soviet forces take Budapest.</i> |
| 19 February | <i>At daybreak, the 3d, 4th, and 5th U.S. Marine Divisions land on Iwo Jima, beginning some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. Marines raise the Stars and Stripes on Mount Suribachi at 10:31 in the morning.</i> |
| 28 February | <i>The U.S. 2d Armored Division drives to within six miles of the Rhine.</i> |